

## VAUGHAN, ROBERT (1592? - 1667), antiquary, collector of the famous Hengwrt library

**Name:** Robert Vaughan  
**Date of birth:** 1592?  
**Date of death:** 1667  
**Spouse:** Catrin Vaughan (née Nannau)  
**Child:** Ann Evans (née Vaughan)  
**Child:** Elin Ellis (née Vaughan)  
**Child:** Jane Owen (née Vaughan)  
**Child:** Margaret Price (née Vaughan)  
**Child:** Hywel Vaughan  
**Child:** Gruffudd Vaughan  
**Child:** Ynyr Vaughan  
**Child:** Hugh Vaughan  
**Parent:** Margaret Fychan (née Owen)  
**Parent:** Hywel Fychan ap Gruffydd ap Hywel  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** antiquary, collector of the famous Hengwrt library  
**Area of activity:** History and Culture; Literature and Writing  
**Author:** Evan David Jones

only legitimate son of Howell Vaughan (died 1639), of Gwengraig, in the township of Garthgynfor and parish of Dolgelley on the eastern slope of Cader Idris, who traced his ancestry from [Cadwgan, lord of Nannau](#), son of [Bleddyn ap Cynfyn](#), prince of Powys. His mother was Margaret, daughter of [Edward Owen](#) of Hengwrt, parish of Llanelltyd, and granddaughter of [Lewis Owen](#), baron of the Exchequer of North Wales. Robert Powell Vaughan, or Robert Vaughan as he came to be known, was born at Gwengraig, about 1592, judging by the record of his entry into Oriel College, Oxford, at the age of 20, in 1612. He left college without taking his degree. The early period of his life is obscure, but it can be argued from his friendship with [Rhys](#) and [Siôn Cain](#), whom he acknowledged to be his tutors in genealogy, that he spent some time at Oswestry. The date of his marriage to Catherine (1594 - 1663), daughter of [Griffith Nanney](#) (born 1568) is not known, but he was living at Gwengraig in 1624 and it is likely that he settled at Hengwrt soon after his marriage. Between 1608 and 1612 Hengwrt had been mortgaged by Robert Owen to his brother-in-law, Howell Vaughan. Robert Vaughan was on the commission of the peace for Merioneth and took an active part in local affairs. He appears to have acted as receiver of bridge mises in the county during the Commonwealth. The controversies of that period do not seem to have greatly disturbed his life. His chief interests were genealogy, early Welsh history and antiquities, and the collection of books and manuscripts. In these pursuits he corresponded with [Rhys](#) and [Siôn Cain](#), [Dr. John Davies](#) of Mallwyd, [Evan Lloyd Jeffrey](#) of Palé, [John Jones](#) of Gellilyfdy (whose manuscripts became his property in 1658), [Meredith Lloyd](#) of Welshpool, [William Maurice](#) of Cefn-y-braich, the [Wynne](#) family of Gwydir, Sir Simonds d'Ewes, John Selden, James Ussher, archbishop of Armagh, and others. The library of manuscripts which he collected at Hengwrt is the finest collection of Welsh manuscripts ever assembled by an individual. It remained at Hengwrt until 1859, when it passed by the will of [Sir Robert Williams Vaughan](#) to [W. W. E. Wynne](#) of Peniarth. The purchase of the reversion of the Hengwrt-Peniarth library to Aberystwyth by [Sir John Williams](#) in 1905 was one of the deciding factors for establishing the National Library of Wales there. Robert Vaughan also collected books, but they were dispersed by Thomas Kerlake, a bookseller of Bristol, early in the 19th century. The catalogue which Robert Vaughan compiled of his library is extant (N.L.W. MS. 9095). He transcribed a large number of literary and historical texts, compiled a concordance of scripture, genealogical books, notably the great collection of Peniarth MS. 287, and tracts on early Welsh history and chronology, and translated ' Brut y Tywysogion ' into English. He published at Oxford in 1662 a small book entitled *British Antiquities Revived*, containing a refutation of Sir Thomas Canon's arguments that [Cadell](#) was the eldest son of [Rhodri Mawr](#) and that, consequently, the princes of Deheubarth had superiority over those of Gwynedd, a correction of the pedigree of the [earl of Carbery](#) as given in [Percy Enderbie](#)'s *Cambria Triumphans*, distinguishing between Gwaethfoed of Powys and Gwaethfoed of Ceredigion, and a short tract on the Five Royal Tribes of Wales.

Robert Vaughan died on Ascension Day 16 May 1667. Anthony Wood, on the authority of [Thomas Ellis](#), rector of Dolgelley, states that he was buried in the church of that parish in 1666. The burial is not recorded in the parish register, but in a draft will, made 1 May 1665, he left instructions for his burial there. He left four sons and four daughters. HOWELL VAUGHAN, of Vanner, sheriff of Merioneth, 1671, who married (1) Jane, daughter of [Robert Owen](#), Ystumcegid, and relict of Hugh Tudor of Egryn, and (2) Lowry, daughter of Griffith Derwas of Cemes, and widow of Humphrey Pugh of Aberffrydian; YNYR VAUGHAN, who was unmarried but who had issue John ab Ynyr, who emigrated to Pennsylvania; HUGH VAUGHAN, who married Elizabeth, daughter of [Edmund Meyrick](#) of Ucheldre; and GRIFFITH VAUGHAN who had Dolmelynllyn and who married Catherine, daughter of John ap Robert ap John ap Lewis ap Meredith of Glynmaelda; MARGARET, who married (1)

[William Price](#), rector of Dolgelley, and (2) [Robert Vaughan](#), son of [Tudor Vaughan](#) of Caerynwch; JANE, who married [Robert Owen](#) (died 1685), of Dolserau; ELIN, who married David Ellis, son of Rowland Ellis of Gwanas; and ANN, who married Hugh Evans of Berth-lwyd in Llanelltyd.

## Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

## Sources

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J. Y. W. Lloyd, *History of the Princes, the Lords Marcher, and the Ancient Nobility of Powys Fadog*, iv, 292-3; vi, 22

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## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Robert Vaughan](#)

## Additional Links

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